

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 OC-06 CCO-00

OMB-01 DHA-02 IO-13 ORM-02 TRSE-00 AID-05 ACDA-07

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O P 031447Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2446

INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY 177

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM

CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER

CIA WASHDC

COMSIXTHFLT

COMPHIBRON SIX

COM THREE FOUR MAU

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

DIA WASHDC

CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 8700

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION DECEMBER 2-3

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REF: BEIRUT 8683 (DTG 011502Z DEC 76)

1. SUMMARY. SITUATION IN SOUTH STABLE, WITH MINOR CLASHES REPORTED IN AYN IBL, BINT JBAYL, AND QLAY'AH. PRESS CLAIMS SYRIA PRESSURING PLO AGAINST RESUMING OPERATIONS DIRECTED AT ISRAEL FROM SOUTH LEBANON. QUADRIpartite COMMITTEE MEETING EXPECTED NEXT WEEK TO DISCUSS ARMS COLLECTION. PRESIDENT SARKIS MET WITH HANNA SA'ID FOLLOWING SA'ID'S MEETING WITH 400 ARMY OFFICERS TO DISCUSS REINSTITUTION OF ARMY. SARKIS REPORTEDLY TOURED BEIRUT NOV 2 INCOGNITO. KFUR FRONT DELEGATION PRESENTED CONDOLENCES TO SYRIAN FONMIN KHADDAM IN DAMASCUS. CERTAIN PALESTINIANS SEEKING A PALESTINIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING IN DAMASCUS VICE CAIRO, MORE FOREIGN AMBASSADORS RETURNING TO LEBANON. FRANCE AND USG REPORTEDLY EXCHANGE NOTES ON LEBANON. ANOTHER PRISONER EXCHANGE REPORTED. AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN RETURNING. FULL ELECTRICITY FOR BEIRUT JAN 15; TELEPHONE AND SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS REQUIRE REPLACEMENT PARTS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE SOUTH: MILITARY ASPECTS. SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON SEEMS QUIET. ONE NEWSPAPER, AL KIFAH AL ARABI, REPORTS MINOR SKIRMISHES IN AYN IBL, BINT JBAYL, AND QLAY'AH, SINCE 30 NOV, BUT L'ORIENT-REPORTS AREA GENERALLY QUIET SINCE ONE WEEK AGO. AMERICAN JOURNALISTS WHO FREQUENTLY VISIT SOUTH LEBANON SAY ALMOST ENTIRE CIVILIAN POPULATION OF BINT JBAYL HAS FLED IN LAST TWO WEEKS DUE TO ARTILLERY SHELLING FROM ISRAELIS AND CHRISTIANS. LEBANESE ARMY G-2 SOURCE REPORTS 3,500 IRAQIS REMAINING IN LEBANON HAVE MOVED TO THE SOUTH. AS SAFIR REPORTS SAUDI UNIT OF ABOUT 1000 SOLDIERS AND "SEVERAL HUNDRED" SYRIAN SOLDIERS WILL MOVE TO SOUTH LEBANON NEXT WEEK.

3. THE SOUTH: POLITICAL ASPECTS. L'ORIENT-LE JOUR, QUOTING "AUTHORIZED POLITICAL SOURCES" CLAIMS SYRIA BEGINNING PRESSURE PLO TO NOT RESUME OPERATIONS AGAINST ISRAEL FROM SOUTH LEBANON. BEIRUT PRESS CARRIED AFP ACCOUNT FROM JERUSALEM OF ISRAELI VIEWS ON SOUTHERN SITUATION STATING: 1) SECRETARY KISSINGER TO MEET WITH ISRAELI AMBASSADOR DINITZ IN WASHINGTON DEC 4; 2) TYRE AND NABATIYAH CONSTITUTE SPECIAL PROBLEMS FOR WHICH AD HOC SOLUTIONS SHOULD BE FOUND; AND 3) NO AGREEMENT YET REACHED ON SOUTH LEBANON THROUGH MEDIATION OF US. PIERRE GEMAYEL SAYS 1969 CAIRO ACCORDS OBSOLETE SINCE IN 1969 PALESTINIAN COMMANDO

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ACTION AGAINST ISRAEL WAS EXPECTED ON ALL ARAB-ISRAELI FRONTS. TODAY, HOWEVER, ALL FRONTS CALM EXCEPT SOUTH LEBANON.

4. COLLECTION OF HEAVY WEAPONS. ARMS COLLECTION EXPECTED BE MAIN ITEM ON AGENDA AT FIRST SAUDI-KUWAITI-SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN QUADRIpartite COMMITTEE MEETING EXPECTED TO BE HELD NEXT WEEK, CHAIRED BY PRESIDENT SARKIS. PRESS NOTES THAT, ALTHOUGH ASF WAS EXPECTED BEGIN COLLECTION OF HEAVY WEAPONS BEFORE DEC 5,

NO OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE TO THIS EFFECT HAS BEEN ISSUED BY ASF COMMAND. RIGHTISTS CONTINUE INSIST ON COLLECTION OF HEAVY WEAPONS FROM PALESTINIANS FIRST; AND LEFTISTS, MEETING NOV 3 TO DISCUSS COLLECTION, HOLD FIRM POSITION COLLECTION SHOULD APPLY ONLY TO THE LEBANESE, NOT PALESTINIANS.

5. SARKIS AND LEBANESE ARMY. PRESIDENT SARKIS RECEIVED GENERAL HANNA SA'ID DEC 2, PRESUMABLY TO DISCUSS FUTURE OF ARMY AND SOUTH LEBANON, AFTER HANNA SA'ID MET NOV 30 WITH 400 CHRISTIAN OFFICERS AT MINISTRY OF DEFENSE TO DISCUSS RECONSTRUCTING THE ARMY. ACCORDING TO L'ORIENT-LE JOUR, SAID SAID THERE IS NO QUESTION OF "A RETURN TO THE OLD FORMULA OF CONFESSIONAL BALANCE WHICH WAS INTRINSICALLY UNWORKABLE AND THE BASIC CAUSE OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE LEBANESE ARMED FORCES," WHICH SHOULD NOT "EVER CHALLENGE THE LEGITIMACY OR ORDERS OF THE LEGAL LEBANESE AUTHORITIES." PRESIDENT SARKIS REPORTEDLY TOURED BEIRUT INCOGNITO NOV. 2.

6. ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION OF SYRIAN FON MIN KHADDAM. KFUR FRONT SENT DELEGATION DEC 2 TO DAMASCUS TO CONVEY CONDOLENCES TO SYRIAN FONMIN KHADDAM. DELEGATION INCLUDED KATAEB MEMBERS KARIM PAKRADOUNI AND EDMUND RIZK, AND NATIONAL LIBERAL PARTY MEMBERS DANY CHAMOUN AND MARUN HELU. BEIRUT RIGHTIST AND MODERATE MOSLEM LEADERS ALL EXPRESSED CONDOLENCES.

7. PALESTINIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING. ACCORDING TO RIGHTIST POLITICAL CIRCLES IN BEIRUT, CERTAIN PALESTINIANS, INCLUDING ABU MAZEN AND ABU MAHER, SEEKING CHANGE LOCATION OF UPCOMING PALESTINIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING FROM CAIRO TO DAMASCUS. PLO LEADERSHIP REPORTEDLY UNENTHUSIASTIC, BUT ARAFAT WILL DISCUSS MATTER SOON IN DAMASCUS.

8. RETURNING FOREIGN AMBASSADORS. FOREIGN MINISTRY PROTOCOL
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DIRECTOR REPORTS NEW SAUDI ARABIAN AND KUWAIT AMBASSADORS IN LEBANON OPERATING TEMPORARILY AS SPECIAL ENVOYS UNTIL THEY PRESENT CREDENTIALS. ITALY AND MEXICO HAVE REQUESTED AND OBTAINED AGREEMENT FOR NEW AMBASSADORS TO LEBANON.

9. FRENCH AND USG EXCHANGE ON NOTES ON LEBANON REPORTED. AN NAHAR REPORTS FROM "DIPLOMATIC SOURCE IN BEIRUT" (WE SUPPOSE FRENCH EMBASSY), THAT THERE HAS BEEN EXCHANGE OF NOTES BETWEEN USG AND FRANCE, IN WHICH FRENCH GOVERNMENT RAISED PROBLEM OF "THE PRINCES GOVERNING LEBANON" (SEPTTEL).

10. ANOTHER PRISONER RELEASE. ACCORDING TO AMERICAN JOURNALIST, ICRC ARRANGED EXCHANGE ON OCCASION OF ID AL ADHA OF 14 PHALANGE HELD PRISONER IN WEST BEIRUT DURING WAR FOR 20 PALESTINIANS HELD IN EASTERN SECTOR.

11. FURTHER SIGNS OF NORMALCY. FIRST RETURNING AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN TO BEIRUT APPARENTLY ARE TWO LOCKHEED AIRCRAFT REPRESENTATIVES, WHO ARRIVED DEC 1. FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF CHICAGO ANNOUNCED PLANS TO REOPEN SOON. BIZRI OF ELECTRICITY SAYS BEGINNING JAN 15 FULL ELECTRIC SERVICE WILL BE RESTORED TO BEIRUT. PRINCIPAL PROBLEM FACING TELEPHONE SYSTEM IN BEIRUT IS LACK OF REPLACEMENT PARTS, SINCE CENTRAL WAREHOUSE OF MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AT DEKOUANE WAS LOOTED AND BURNED DURING WAR, WITH LOSSES OF SOME US DOLS TWENTY MILLION. UNDERWATER CABLE FROM BEIRUT TO MARSEILLES UNDEMANAGED, PERMITTING CONTINUED INTERNATIONAL TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION S, BUT SATELLITE STATION AT ARBANIEH REQUIRES SOME REPAIRS. LANE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PALESTINIANS, POLITICAL SITUATION, COMBAT OPERATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: vogelfj
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BEIRUT08700
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760448-0100
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761272/aaaacklq.tel
Line Count: 183
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 BEIRUT 8683
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: vogelfj
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 MAR 2004 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <08 SEP 2004 by vogelfj>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LEBANESE SITUATION DECEMBER 2-3 CONFIDENTIAL CONFIDENTIAL
TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006